Progress In Korea.

The Korean emperor rides a bicycle, the palace of Seoul is lighted by electricity and furnished with elevators, and the public officials got away with public moneys last year to the amount of a couple of million yen. This led the Korean prime minister to adopt a very singular plan to stop the leaks of the treasury. The official whose embezzlement foots up to more than 2,000 yen shall suffer the penalty of death. This makes the little thieves very active.—New Haven Register.

Keene's Manner.

James R. Keene is very emphatic in his likes and dislikes of men. To a friend he is always most genial, but his glance freezes the man he does not like on his first approach and often before he has a chance to utter a word. His estimate of those he does not like is unique—the laconic explanation, "Pugh!" Whenever Mr. Keene's associates hear him give vent to that expression they know well what it means—there is no hope for that man if Mr. Keene can in any way thwart him.

A Blood Stained Book.

M. Diraison, a lieutenant in the French navy, who wrote a book entitled "Les Maritimes," for which he was cashiered, is being kept busy fighting duels with people referred to in it. He fought his fourth duel recently with a son of the Russian consul at Toulon. M. Diraison was wounded slightly in the arm. As soon as he shall have recovered he will begin a fresh series of duels with naval officers. So far he has been wounded twice and has wounded two adversaries.

Black Rock

By RALPH CONNOR

It was one of those perfect afternoons that so often come in the early Canadian summer before nature grows weary with the heat. The white gravel road was trimmed on either side with turf of living green, close cropped by the sheep that wandered in flocks along its whole length. Beyond the picturesque snake fences stretched the fields of springing grain, of varying shades of green, with here and there a dark brown patch, marking a turnip field or summer fallow, and far back were the woods of maple and beech and elm, with here and there the tufted top of a mighty pine, the lonely representative of a vanished race, standing clear above the humbler trees.

As we drove through the big swamp, where the yawning, haunted gully plunges down to its gloomy depths, Graeme reminded me of that night when our horse saw something in that same gully and refused to go past, and I felt again, though it was broad daylight, something of the grewsomeness that shivered down my back as I saw in the moonlight the gleam of a white thing not far through the pine trunks.

As we came nearer home the houses became familiar. Every house had its tale. We had eaten or slept in most of them; we had sampled apples and cherries and plums from their orchards, openly as guests or secretly as marauders, under cover of night—the more delightful way, I fear. Ah, happy days, with these innocent crimes and fleeting remorses, how bravely we faced them, and how gayly we lived them, and how yearningly we look back at them now! The sun was just dipping into the treetops of the distant woods behind as we came to the top of the last hill that overlooked the valley in which lay the village of Riverdale. Wooded hills stood about it on three sides, and where the hills faded out there lay the millpond sleeping and smiling in the sun. Through the village ran the white road, up past the old frame church and on to the white manse hiding among the trees. That was Graeme's home and mine, too, for I had never known another worthy of the name. We held up our team to look down over the valley, with its rampart of wooded hills, its shining pond and its nestling village. The beauty, the peace, the warm, loving homeliness of the scene, came about our hearts; but, being men, we could find no words.

"Let's go!" cried Graeme, and down the hill we tore and rocked and swayed, to the amazement of the steady team, whose education from the earliest years had impressed upon their minds the criminality of attempting to do anything but walk carefully down a hill, at least for two-thirds of the way. Through the village, in a cloud of dust, we swept, catching a glimpse of a well known face here and there and flinging a salutation as we passed, leaving the owner of the face rooted to his place in astonishment at the sight of Graeme whirling on in his old time, well known reckless manner. Only old Dunc McLeod was equal to the moment, for as Graeme called out, "Hello, Dunc!" the old man lifted up his hands and called back in an awed voice:

"Bless my soul! Is it yourself?"

"Stands his whisky well, poor old chap!" was Graeme's comment.

As we neared the church he pulled up his team, and we went quietly past the sleepers there, then again on the full run down the gentle slope, over the little brook and up to the gate. He had hardly got his team pulled up before, flinging me the lines, he was out over the wheel, for coming down the walk, with her hands lifted high, was a dainty little lady, with the face of an angel. In a moment Graeme had her in his arms. I heard the faint cry, "My boy, my boy!" and got down on the other side to attend to my off horse, surprised to find my hands trembling and my eyes full of tears. Back upon the steps stood an old gentleman, with white hair and flowing beard, handsome, straight and stately, Graeme's father, waiting his turn.

"Welcome home, my lad!" was his greeting as he kissed his son, and the tremor of his voice and the sight of the two men kissing each other, like women, sent me again to my horses' heads.

"There's Connor, mother!" shouted out Graeme, and the dainty little lady in her black silk and white lace, came out to me quickly, with outstretched hands.

"You, too, are welcome home," she said and kissed me.

I stood with my hat off, saying something about being glad to come, but wishing that I could get away before I should make quite a fool of myself, for as I looked down upon that beautiful face, pale, except for a faint flush upon each faded cheek, and read the story of pain endured and conquered, and as I thought of all the long years of waiting and of vain hoping, I found my throat dry and sore, and the words would not come. But her quick sense needed no words, and she came to my help.

"You will find Jack at the stable," she said, smiling. "He ought to have been here."

The stable! Why had I not thought of that before? Thankfully now my words came:

"Yes, certainly, I'll find him, Mrs. Graeme. I suppose he's as much of a scapegrace as ever." And off I went to look up Graeme's young brother, who had given every promise in the old days of developing into as stirring a rascal as one could desire, but who, as I found out later, had not lived these years in his mother's home for nothing.

"Oh, Jack's a good boy!" she answered, smiling again, as she turned toward the other two, now waiting for her upon the walk.

The week that followed was a happy one for us all, but for the mother it was full to the brim with joy. Her sweet face was full of content, and in her eyes rested a great peace. Our days were spent driving about among the hills or strolling through the maple woods or down into the tamarack swamp, where the pitcher plants and the swamp lilies and the marigold waved above the deep moss. In the evenings we sat under the trees on the lawn till the stars came out and the night dews drove us in. Like two lovers, Graeme and his mother would wander off together, leaving Jack and me to each other. Jack was reading for divinity and was really a fine, manly fellow, with all his brother's turn for Rugby, and I took to him amazingly, but after the day was over we would gather about the supper table, and the talk would be of all things under heaven—art, football, theology. The mother would lead in all. How quick she was, how bright her fancy, how subtle her intellect, and through all a gentle grace, very winning and beautiful to see!

Do what I would, Graeme would talk little of the mountains and his life there.

"My lion will not roar, Mrs. Graeme," I complained. "He simply will not."

"You should twist his tail," said Jack.

"That seems to be the difficulty, Jack," said his mother, "to get hold of his tale."

"Oh, mother," groaned Jack, "you never did such a thing before! How could you? Is it this baleful western influence?"

"I shall reform, Jack," she replied brightly.

"But, seriously, Graeme," I remonstrated, "you ought to tell your people of your life, that free, glorious life in the mountains."

"Free! Glorious! To some men perhaps!" said Graeme and then fell into silence.

But I saw Graeme as a new man the night he talked theology with his father. The old minister was a splendid Calvinist, of heroic type, and as he discoursed of God's sovereignty and election his face glowed and his voice rang out.

Graeme listened intently, now and then putting in a question, as one would a keen knife thrust into a foe, but the old man knew his ground and moved easily among his ideas, demolishing the enemy as he appeared with jaunty grace. In the full flow of his triumphant argument Graeme turned to him with sudden seriousness.

"Look here, father. I was born a Calvinist, and I can't see how any one with a level head can hold anything else than that the Almighty has some idea as to how he wants to run his universe, and he means to carry out his idea and is carrying it out. But what would you do in a case like this?"

Then he told the story of poor Billy Breen, his fight and his defeat.

"Would you preach election to that chap?"

The mother's eyes were shining with tears.

The old gentleman blew his nose like a trumpet and then said gravely:

"No, my boy. You don't feed babes with meat. But what came to him?"

Then Graeme asked me to finish the tale. After I had finished the story of Billy's final triumph and of Craig's part in it they sat long silent till the minister, clearing his throat hard and blowing his nose more like a trumpet than ever, said, with great emphasis:

"Thank God for such a man in such a place! I wish there were more of us like him."

"I should like to see you out there, sir," said Graeme admiringly. "You'd get them, but you wouldn't have time for election."

"Yes, yes," said his father warmly; "I should love to have a chance just to preach election to those poor lads. Would I were twenty years younger!"

"It is worth a man's life," said Graeme earnestly.

His younger brother turned his face eagerly toward the mother. For answer she slipped her hand into his and said softly, while her eyes shone like stars:

"Some day, Jack, perhaps. God knows."

But Jack only looked steadily at her, smiling a little and patting her hand.

"You'd shine there, mother," said Graeme, smiling upon her. "You'd better come with me."

She started and said faintly:

"With you?" It was the first hint he had given of his purpose. "You are going back?"

"What—as a missionary?" said Jack.

"Not to preach, Jack—I'm not orthodox enough," looking at his father and shaking his head—"but to build railroads and lend a hand to some poor chap if I can."

"Could you not find work nearer home, my boy?" asked the father. "There is plenty of both kinds near us here surely."

"Lots of work, but not mine, I fear," answered Graeme, keeping his eyes away from his mother's face. "A man must do his own work."

His voice was quiet and resolute, and, glancing at the beautiful face at the end of the table, I saw in the pale lips and yearning eyes that the mother was offering up her firstborn, that ancient sacrifice. But not all the agony of sacrifice could wring from her entreaty or complaint in the hearing of her sons. That was for other ears and for the silent hours of the night. And next morning, when she came down to meet us, her face was wan and weary, but it wore the peace of victory and a glory not of earth. Her greeting was full of dignity, sweet and gentle, but when she came to Graeme she lingered over him and kissed him twice, and that was all that any of us ever saw of that sore fight.

At the end of the week I took leave of them and last of all of the mother.

She hesitated just a moment, then suddenly put her hands upon my shoulders and kissed me, saying softly:

"You are his friend. You will sometimes come to me?"

"Gladly, if I may," I hastened to answer, for the sweet, brave face was too much to bear, and till she left us for that world of which she was a part I kept my word, to my own great and lasting good.

When Graeme met me in the city at the end of the summer, he brought me her love and then burst forth:

"Connor, do you know, I have just discovered my mother. I have never known her till this summer."

"More fool you," I answered, for often had I, who had never known a mother, envied him his.

"Yes; that is true," he answered shortly, "but you cannot see until you have eyes."

Before he set out again for the west I gave him a supper, asking the men who had been with us in the old varsity days. I was doubtful as to the wisdom of this and was persuaded only by Graeme's eager assent to my proposal.

"Certainly; let's have them," he said. "I shall be awfully glad to see them. Great stuff they were."

"But I don't know, Graeme. You see—well, hang it—you know—you're different, you know."

He looked at me curiously.

"I hope I can still stand a good supper, and if the boys can't stand me, why, I can't help it. I'll do anything but roar, and don't you begin to work off your menagerie act. Now, you hear me!"

"Well, it is rather hard lines that when I have been talking up my lion for a year and then finally secure him he will not roar."

"Serves you right," he replied quite heartlessly. "But I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll feed! Don't you worry," he added soothingly. "The supper will go."

And go it did. The supper was of the best, the wines first class. I had asked Graeme about the wines.

"Do as you like, old man," was his answer. "It's your supper. But," he added, "are the men all straight?"

I ran them over in my mind.

"Yes, I think so."

"If not, don't you help them down, and anyway you can't be too careful. But don't mind me. I am quit of the whole business from this out."

So I ventured wines, for the last time, as it happened.

We were a quaint combination—old "Beetles," whose nickname was prophetic of his future fame as a bugman, as the fellows irreverently said; "Stumpy" Smith, a demon bowler; "Polly" Lindsay, slow as ever and as sure as when he held the halfback line with Graeme and used to make my heart stand still at his cool deliberation. But he was never known to fumble or funk, and somehow he always got us out safe enough. Then there were Rattray—"Rat" for short—who, from a swell had developed into a cynic with a sneer, awfully clever and a good enough fellow at heart; little "Wig" Martin, the sharpest quarter ever seen, and Barney Lundy, center scrimmage, whose terrific roar and rush had often struck terror to the enemy's heart and who was Graeme's slave. Such was the party.

As the supper went on my fears began to vanish, for if Graeme did not roar he did the next best thing—ate and talked quite up to his old form. Now we played our matches over again, bitterly lamenting the "ifs" that had lost us the championships and wildly approving the tackles that had saved and the runs that had made the varsity crowd go mad with delight and had won for us, and as their names came up in talk we learned how life had gone with those who had been our comrades of ten years ago. Some success had lifted to high places, some failure had left upon the rocks, and a few lay in their graves.

But as the evening wore on I began to wish that I had left out the wines, for the men began to drop an occasional oath, though I had let them know during the summer that Graeme was not the man he had been. But Graeme smoked and talked and heeded not till Rattray swore by that name most sacred of all ever borne by man. Then Graeme opened upon him in a cool, slow way:

"What an awful fool a man is to damn things as you do, Rat! Things are not damned. It is men who are, and that is too bad to be talked much about. But when a man flings out of his foul mouth the name of Jesus Christ"—here he lowered his voice—"it's a shame; it's more—it's a crime."

There was dead silence. Then Rattray replied:

"I suppose you're right enough. It is bad form. But crime is rather strong, I think."

"Not if you consider who it is," said Graeme, with emphasis.

"Oh, come now!" broke in Beetles. "Religion is all right. It is a good thing and, I believe, a necessary thing for the race. But no one takes seriously any longer the Christ myth."

"What about your mother, Beetles?" put in Wig Martin.

Beetles consigned him to the pit and was silent, for his father was an Episcopal clergyman and his mother a saintly woman.

"I fooled with that for some time, Beetles, but it won't do. You can't build a religion that will take the devil out of a man on a myth. That won't do the trick. I don't want to argue about it, but I am quite convinced the myth theory is not reasonable, and, besides, it won't work."

"Will the other work?" asked Rattray, with a sneer.

"Sure," said Graeme. "I've seen it."

"Where?" challenged Rattray. "I haven't seen much of it."

"Yes, you have, Rattray; you know you have," said Wig again.

But Rattray ignored him.

"I'll tell you, boys," said Graeme. "I want you to know anyway why I believe what I do."

Then he told them the story of old man Nelson, from the old coast days, before I knew him, to the end. He told the story well. The stern fight and the victory of the life and the self sacrifice and the pathos of the death appealed to these men, who loved fight and could understand sacrifice.

"That's why I believe in Jesus Christ, and that's why I think it a crime to fling his name about."

"I wish to heaven I could say that," said Beetles.

"Keep wishing hard enough, and it will come to you," said Graeme.

"Look here, old chap," said Rattray. "You're quite right about this. I'm willing to own up. Wig is correct. I know a few at least of that stamp, but most of those who go in for that sort of thing are not much account."

"For ten years, Rattray," said Graeme in a downright matter of fact way, "you and I have tried this sort of thing," tapping a bottle, "and we got out of it all there is to be got, paid well for it, too, and, faugh, you know it's not good enough, and the more you go in for it the more you curse yourself. So I have quit this, and I am going in for the other."

"What? Going in for preaching?"

"Not much—railroading, money in it—and lending a hand to fellows on the rocks."

"I say, don't you want a center forward?" said big Barney in his deep voice.

"Every man must play his game in his place, old chap. I'd like to see you tackle it, though, right well," said Graeme earnestly.

And so he did in the after years, and good tackling it was. But that is another story.

"But, I say, Graeme," persisted Beetles, "about this business—do you mean to say you go the whole thing—Jonah, you know, and the rest of it?"

Graeme hesitated, then said:

"I haven't much of a creed, Beetles; don't really know how much I believe. But"—by this time he was standing—"I do know that good is good, and bad is bad, and good and bad are not the same, and I know a man's a fool to follow the one and a wise man to follow the other, and," lowering his voice, "I believe God is at the back of a man who wants to get done with bad. I've tried all that folly," sweeping his hand over the glasses and bottles, "and all that goes with it, and I've done with it."

"I'll go you that far," roared big Barney, following his old captain as of yore.

"Good man," said Graeme, striking hands with him.

"Put me down," said little Wig cheerfully.

Then I took up the word, for there rose before me the scene in the league saloon, and I saw the beautiful face with the deep, shining eyes, and I was speaking for her again. I told them of Craig and his fight for these men's lives. I told them, too, of how I had been too indolent to begin. "But," I said, "I am going this far from tonight." And I swept the bottles into the champagne tub.

"I say," said Polly Lindsay, coming up in his old style, slow, but sure, "let's all go in, say, for five years."

And so we did. We didn't sign anything, but every man shook hands with Graeme.

And as I told Craig about this a year later, when he was on his way back from his old land trip to join Graeme in the mountains, he threw up his head in the old way and said: "It was well done. It must have been worth seeing. Old man Nelson's work is not done yet. Tell me again." And he made me go over the whole scene, with all the details put in.

But when I told Mrs. Mavor after two years had gone she only said, "Old things are passed away; all things are become new," but the light glowed in her eyes till I could not see their color. But all that, too, is another story.

CHAPTER XV.

COMING TO THEIR OWN.

A MAN with a conscience is often provoking, sometimes impossible. Persuasion is lost upon him. He will not get angry, and he looks at one with such a faraway expression in his face that in striving to persuade him one feels earthly and even fiendish. At least this was my experience with Craig. He spent a week with me just before he sailed for the old land for the purpose, as he said, of getting some of the coal dust and other grime out of him.

He made me angry the last night of his stay and all the more that he remained quite sweetly unmoved. It was a strategic mistake of mine to tell him how Nelson came home to us and how Graeme stood up before the varsity chaps at my supper and made his confession and confused Rattray's easy stepping profanity and started his own five year league, for all this stirred in Craig the hero, and he was ready for all sorts of heroic nonsense, as I called it. We talked of everything but the one thing, and about that we said not a word till, bending low to poke my fire and to hide my face, I plunged:

"You will see her, of course?"

He made no pretense of not understanding, but answered:

"Of course."

"There's really no sense in her staying over there," I suggested.

"And yet she is a wise woman," he said, as if carefully considering the question.

"Heaps of landlords never see their tenants, and they are none the worse."

"The landlords?"

"No, the tenants."

"Probably, haying such landlords."

"And, as for the old lady, there must be some one in the connection to whom it would be a godsend to care for her."

"Now, Connor," he said quietly, "don't. We have gone over all there is to be said. Nothing new has come. Don't turn it all up again."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]